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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOSH HAWLEY, a Senator from the State of Missouri.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Everlasting God, keep our lawmakers in Your holy hands. Empower them to heed Your instructions as they remember that Your admonition provides light for their journey.

Let Your gentleness motivate our Senators to respect one another and to guard their lips. Lord, give them the gift of Your peace that provides joy even during life's storms. Use them as instruments for righteousness in a sinful world.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, January 13, 2020.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOSH HAWLEY, a Senator from the State of Missouri, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. HAWLEY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been 10 days since the United States removed Iran's chief terrorist, Qasem Soleimani, from the battlefield. It has been 5 days since the brutal violence, recklessness, and failed governance that defines the Iranian's regime was put on full display with their shoot-down of a Ukrainian civilian airline and the death of all 167 souls on board.

After a brief stab at a failed coverup, the Iranian Government had to come clean and explain that its own recklessness had killed more than 80 Ira-

nians, 63 Canadians, and the other victims. Despite the claims of supposed experts on Iran that Iranians would rally behind their oppressive regime, the truth is quite different. Instead, thousands of Iranians have taken to the streets to celebrate Soleimani's death, condemn the regime's domestic repression, call for regime change in Tehran, and denounce their government's feeble efforts to lay its own violence at the feet of the United States.

According to journalists, here is one chant that has been ringing out on the streets of Iran: "Soleimani is a murderer, his leader a traitor." Here is another: "They are lying that our enemy is America, our enemy is right here." The irony is rich.

As Iran's master terrorist, Soleimani himself led efforts to brutalize Iranian protesters who dared to challenge the regime. Just a few months ago, he boasted to Iraqi leaders: "We in Iran know how to deal with protests." That violent approach is exactly why Iraqis and Iranians alike are now celebrating his death and denouncing the regime he helped lead. I am sure the mullahs regret that Soleimani himself is no longer around to help intimidate and murder their own citizens into silence.

These protests aren't limited to Iran either. Protestors are back in Iraq as well—not phony, Iran-staged demonstrations but real citizen-led protests across Iraq. Iraqis are demanding a government whose top priority is Iraqi's own interests rather than facilitating Iranian interference.

Given the death and terror that Iran has wrought in the Middle East for decades, this kind of reaction shouldn't be a surprise, but strangely—strangely—it seems it has surprised many of our fellow Americans.

Here at home, many on the left and in the media had rushed to reflexively blame President Trump, and not the Iranian regime, for the recent violence.

After only the earliest initial reports, the Speaker of the House rushed

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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to blame our administration for “needless provocations,” she said, and following Iran’s shoot-down of the airliner, one prominent House Democrat characterized the regime’s violence as “collateral damage,” resulting from America’s actions—exactly how the Iranians themselves were trying to spin it.

One Democrat running for President tried a similar, embarrassing equivocation. He said the civilians Iran had blown up were “caught in the middle of an unnecessary and unwarranted military tit-for-tat.”

For several days, you could not open a newspaper or turn on the television without prominent Democrats and so-called foreign policy experts setting aside decades of Iranian aggression to imply—or even say outright—that America, not Iran, was responsible for the cycle of violence and that President Donald Trump was the real villain.

So we are faced with a remarkable spectacle. Even under threat of tear gas or even gunfire, the brave people of Iran are themselves displaying more willingness to criticize their own brutal rulers than we saw in the initial responses from some Democrats and so-called experts right here at home. It is a remarkable spectacle but a pretty sad one. I hope this can be a lesson to anyone who has let their domestic political grievances pollute their judgment of world affairs.

It shouldn’t take the brave Iranian people themselves to remind American leaders that Tehran has long been the force for bad in this situation, and the United States is a force for good.

As I have said, the President’s bold action has attracted significant criticism for Democrats here in Congress. It is the Senate’s prerogative to weigh in on foreign policy, and I fully expect we will debate a War Powers Resolution from some of our colleagues very soon.

I look forward to discussing the last administration’s failed strategy that got us here. The Obama administration responded to Iran’s violence and aggression with appeasement and retrenchment rather than pushback.

I look forward to discussing the fact that senior military commanders did not just recommend the President take immediate action to disrupt Iranian plots against our personnel, they believed the United States would be “culpably negligent” if it didn’t act to stop the plotting.

I expect that some of the Democrats who have rhetorically embraced the intelligence community when it suited their political interests may now rush to criticize the career professionals. I look forward to hearing our colleagues who want to quibble over the word “imminent” explain just how close we should let the terrorists come to killing more Americans before we defend ourselves—just how close should we let terrorists come to killing more Americans before we defend ourselves.

I assure you, if the President had not acted to disrupt a deadly attack, I am

confident these same critics would have blasted him for failing—failing—to protect American lives.

Just a few days before the strike, the junior Senator from Connecticut was blasting—blasting—the administration for “render[ing] America impotent in the Middle East.” He complained that “no one fears us, no one listens to us.” Naturally, after President Trump did take bold action, the same colleague has become a fierce critic of President Trump for supposedly being too harsh—too harsh. That is not exactly a model of consistency.

Our Democratic colleagues were very happy to give President Obama wide latitude to engage in strikes where American lives and American interests were far less directly at stake than with Mr. Soleimani.

Now the same Democrats who embraced the Obama intervention in Libya, for example, say it is a bridge too far for President Trump to respond with limited force to Iranian-directed strikes against American interests and personnel that have been escalating for months. OK in Libya, not OK here—the double standards are literally head-spinning.

So I expect the Senate will soon debate Senator KAINE’s War Powers Resolution. For a year now, I have wanted the Senate to go on record about our military presence and strategy in Syria and Iraq. I am glad my Democratic colleagues may finally be interested in having that discussion rather than ducking it.

I don’t believe the blunt instrument of the War Powers Resolution is an acceptable substitute for the studied oversight the Senate can exercise through hearings, resolutions, and more tailored legislation. So I will strongly oppose the resolution, and I would urge all our colleagues to consider what message the Senate should send to Iran and the world at the very moment that America’s actions are challenging the calculus in Tehran for the better. We appear to have restored a measure of deterrence in the Middle East, so let’s not screw it up.

#### IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, on Friday Speaker PELOSI signaled that she may finally wind down her one-woman blockade of a fair and timely impeachment trial. It has certainly been revealing to see House Democrats first claim that impeachment was so urgent—so urgent—that they could not even wait to fill out the factual record and then, subsequently, delay it for weeks. I am glad the Speaker finally realized she never had any leverage in the first place to dictate Senate procedure to Senators and is giving in to bipartisan pressure to move forward.

In terms of influencing Senate proceedings, this strange gambit has achieved absolutely nothing, but it has produced one unintended side effect: The Speaker’s efforts to precommit the Senate to carry on an investigation with which her own House lost pa-

tience concedes that the House case is rushed, weak, and incomplete.

Let me say that again. By trying and failing to get the Senate to precommit to redoing the House’s investigation, House Democrats admitted that even they did not believe their own case is persuasive.

Think about the message it sends when the prosecutors are this desperate to get the judge and jury to redo their homework for them, and think about the separation of powers. The House, knowingly—knowingly—declined to spend time on legal battles and due process that it would have needed to pursue the certain avenues. Now, after declining to fight their own fight, they want the Senate to precommit ourselves to wage these potentially protracted legal battles on their behalf. They wanted Senators to precommit ourselves to not only judge the case that House Democrats are actually going to send over but, also, to reopen the investigatory stage and maybe supplement Chairman SCHIFF’s slapdash work. In other words, the President’s opponents are afraid of having the Senate judge the case they actually are going to send us. They are afraid of having the Senate judge the case they themselves voted on. That alone speaks volumes.

A few weeks ago, in real time, many Senators and legal experts tried to warn House Democrats that they were nowhere near a finished product—nowhere near—and that the Articles of Impeachment they had drafted were more like a censure resolution based on partisan anger than an actual impeachment based on careful investigation.

The House ignored us at the time. They rushed ahead to meet a political timetable. Now they have spent almost a month conceding that their own case does not stand on its own and searching for ways to supplement it from the outside. This is exactly the kind of toxic new precedent that many of us warned about back in December—that Speaker PELOSI’s House was not sending the Senate a thorough investigation. They were just tossing up a jump ball and hoping that the political winds might blow things their way.

So here we are. The Senate was never going to precommit ourselves to redoing the prosecutors’ homework for them, and we were never going to allow the Speaker of the House to dictate Senate proceedings to Senators.

House Democrats have already done enough damage to the precedent, to national unity, and to our institutions of government. The Senate will not be sucked into this precedent-breaking path. We will fulfill our constitutional duty. We will honor the reason for which the Founders created this body: to ensure our institutions and our Republic can rise above short-term, factional fever.

The House has done enough damage. The Senate is ready to fulfill our duty.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it has now been 26 days since House Democrats voted to impeach the President of the United States. This is a predictable ending to an increasingly embarrassing impeachment inquiry. Apparently, Speaker PELOSI, Chairman SCHIFF, Chairman NADLER, and others were in such a big hurry to get this done before the end of the year, they have obviously gotten cold feet because they have refused to present the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate so that we can have the trial.

As the Presiding Officer knows, ordinarily, if you are presented with a situation in which the prosecution refuses to proceed to put on the evidence in the case, they are dismissed as a routine matter—dismissal for want of prosecution—or if, in fact, they do intend to present the Articles of Impeachment, there is a fundamental notion of basic fairness included in the guarantee of a speedy trial that is obviously being neglected, avoided, and abused by the Speaker and her leaders in the House.

Our Democratic colleagues in the House rushed through their investigation in only 12 weeks, and it ended up passing Articles of Impeachment on a partisan basis. After repeatedly saying that this is a grave and urgent matter, it seems that Speaker PELOSI has experienced some buyer's remorse and has questioned just how grave and urgent it really is.

Here we are, as I said, 26 days later, and she still has not sent the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate. As we know, even though some have suggested the Senate could somehow proceed to trial absent the delivery of those articles here, we can't try the case until the charges are delivered.

Finally, last Friday, the Speaker indicated that she will transmit the articles this week. They will also have to name impeachment managers, Representatives from the House who will come over and actually present the charges to the Senate and attempt to produce evidence in support of those charges.

It remains to be seen whether the Speaker will deliver the articles this week. She has been withholding them, as I said, for nearly 4 weeks now, claiming that it is part of her strategy to get leverage over the Senate, a strategy that has yielded no positive results.

In fact, what we have seen is, the Speaker has zero leverage in the Senate. She runs the House; there is no doubt about that. But the Senate is a separate body. We don't take our instructions from the House, just as the House does not take their direction from the Senate.

Before the House even voted on the articles, Leader McCONNELL said that the Senate should follow the same bipartisan framework used to guide the Clinton impeachment trial. I say "bipartisan" because, at that time, 100 Senators agreed to this path forward.

The logic goes this way: If it was good enough for President Clinton, then it should be good enough for President Trump. Suffice it to say, the Speaker disagrees. Instead of sending the Articles of Impeachment over and letting 100 Members of the Senate decide how best to proceed, she chose to take matters into her own hands.

Apparently, "the sole Power of Impeachment," as the Constitution describes the House's role, isn't good enough for Speaker PELOSI. She is now trying to assume what the Constitution says is the Senate's "sole Power to try all Impeachments."

We shouldn't be fooled. Despite her claims, this is not an effort to create a fair process. A fair process would be like the Bill Clinton impeachment trial, which was agreed to by 100 Senators on a bipartisan basis. Our Democratic colleagues in the House threw fairness out the window months ago. This is Speaker PELOSI singlehandedly ignoring the express commands of the Constitution for her own perceived political benefit.

Republicans aren't the only ones who think the Speaker has gone too far. There is bipartisan agreement that Speaker PELOSI should send the Articles of Impeachment over here forthwith.

A number of our Senate Democrats have expressed their desire to get started with the impeachment trial. I think the senior Senator from California—our friend Mrs. FEINSTEIN, same State as the Speaker of the House—summed it up best when she said:

The longer it goes on, the less urgent it becomes. . . . So if it's serious and urgent, send them over. If it isn't, don't send it over.

Irrefutable logic.

We are hearing from a growing number of House Democrats who have split from Speaker PELOSI and say that it is time to send the articles. For example, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee said that "we control it in the House, MITCH McCONNELL controls it in the Senate." Senator McCONNELL might disagree with that, but that is what the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee said. He conceded: "I think it is time to send the impeachment to the Senate."

With Speaker PELOSI facing increasing backlash from Members of her own party, including her rank-and-file Democrats, you can't help but wonder who is winning this game that she is playing. It is clearly a game. It is laughable to say that she is doing this for the sake of the American people or the Constitution.

A new poll released by The Hill and Harris last week showed that 58 percent of voters nationwide think it is

high time for the House to send the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate—58 percent.

This delay isn't putting President Trump in a bad position. In fact, it is further proving the partisan motivations that have been driving the House impeachment inquiry from the very beginning.

Speaker PELOSI obviously isn't doing this for the good of House Democrats. Their role in the impeachment inquiry is finished. As I mentioned, a number of her own Members think she is making a big mistake by holding up the articles.

This clearly isn't giving our Senate Democratic colleagues a leg up. Several of our colleagues in the Senate have voiced their desire to get this thing going, as one has said. In fact, I think it is actually harming our Senate Democratic colleagues who are on the Presidential campaign trail.

Can you think what Senator WARREN, Senator SANDERS, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator BENNET, and Senator BOOKER—who, until this morning, were all vying for the chance to be President—are thinking about the desirability of sitting here in the Senate Chamber 6 days a week while the Iowa caucuses are coming up on February 3, the New Hampshire primary, South Carolina, Nevada, among others? The Iowa caucuses are happening just 3 weeks from today. New Hampshire's primary is the week after that. These Senators on the Democratic side who are running for the Democratic nominations have campaigns that are in high gear. I imagine the last place they want to be is in Washington, DC, sitting in this Chamber during an impeachment trial.

During the trial, every Member of the Senate will be sitting at our desks, 6 days a week, until we are finished. And no, we will not have our electronic devices. I just saw a piece of cabinetry in the cloakroom where we will be required to turn over our iPads and our iPhones. This will just be us, not speaking—we don't have a speaking role; we have a listening role—sitting for hours each afternoon, 6 days a week, until we finish this process. That doesn't leave a lot of time for our Senate colleagues who are running for the Democratic nomination to talk to voters in Iowa or New Hampshire.

The longer Speaker PELOSI holds on to the Articles of Impeachment, the closer a trial gets to overlapping with those key dates. You have to imagine that our friends on the other side who are running for President are getting a little nervous. CORY BOOKER, who left the campaign trail this morning, recently said this trial could be a "big, big blow" to his campaign. Even a short, 2-week trial could mean "literally dozens of events we won't be able to do." While that is no longer true for Senator BOOKER, it is for the remaining candidates.

Senator WARREN shared this same sentiment, and she thinks being in Washington would prevent her from

being able to build critical, personal connections on the campaign trail. Had Speaker PELOSI immediately transmitted the Articles of Impeachment at the end of last year, it would have been the first item on the Senate's agenda when we reconvened in January. We could have used the Clinton model to guide the process, the same process the leader has promised since before the articles even passed.

I can't help but imagine that the Senate and the American people would be close to putting this entire saga behind us, but, instead, the Speaker sat on the articles. She stood in the way of the Senate's duty to try the impeachment trial, and she stood in the way of President Trump's due process rights.

The only people who seem to gain anything from this are the Democrats who are running for President but who are not U.S. Senators and, thus, aren't going to be tied up during the impeachment trial. Oddly enough, one of these candidates and his son are looming figures in the impeachment inquiry. If you are Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg, or any other candidate who isn't a Member of the Senate, you have to be glad that the Speaker sat on these articles for nearly 4 weeks. Having your competitors stuck in Washington, literally in their seats, while you are hitting the campaign trail there—well, that seems like a pretty good advantage to me.

The timeline the Speaker created is all but sure to interfere with the Iowa caucuses. It is remarkable that Democrats' effort to impeach a President of the opposing party could end up having a negative impact on the Presidential candidates of their own. All of this is to say, it is time to bring this embarrassing chapter to an end.

Republicans and Democrats and the American people all agree that it is time to get the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate so that we can try the case according to our duties under the Constitution and the American people and the Congress can move on.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the President of the United States is charged with committing a grave injury to our democracy: trying to shake down a foreign leader to get him to interfere in our elections, using the powers of his public office to benefit himself and jaundice our elections. These are the kinds of actions the Framers of our Constitution most

feared when they forged the impeachment powers of the Congress.

The House of Representatives decided the President's conduct warranted his impeachment. The Senate's constitutional duty now is to try that case to the best of our ability with honesty, with integrity, with impartiality, and with fairness.

A fair trial is one that considers all the facts and gives the Senators all the information they need to make an informed decision. That means relevant witnesses. That means relevant documents. That means the truth. Without these things, a Senate trial would become a farce, a nationally televised meeting of the mock trial club.

There is a reason that, with one exception, every impeachment trial of any official in the history of the United States has featured witnesses. That one exception was the trial of a fellow Senator in the 18th century, and the question of his impeachment was dismissed on jurisdictional grounds before the issue of witnesses could ever come up. Every other trial has had witnesses. So when Leader MCCONNELL talks precedent, he is talking about witnesses, plain and simple.

The Democratic request for four fact witnesses and three specific sets of relevant documents is very much in line with our history. We don't know what those witnesses will say. We don't know what those documents will reveal. They could help the President's case, or they could hurt it. Regardless of the consequences for the President, Democrats are on a quest for the truth.

At the moment, Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans are opposing witnesses and documents, but they can't seem to muster a real reason why. Instead, Leader MCCONNELL and the Republican leadership have labeled a Democratic request for witnesses and documents as "political." If seeking the truth is political, if doing our constitutional duty is political in the minds of our Republican colleagues, then the Republican Party is in trouble. History is not kind to political parties that fight to hide the truth. History is not kind to parties that participate in coverups.

If anything, these absurd accusations by Republicans demonstrate just how unable Republicans have been to make an affirmative case about why the Senate shouldn't ask for evidence. The Republican argument against calling witnesses is basically nonexistent. The most commonly repeated talking point from the other side is that we should follow the example of the 1999 Clinton trial by deciding on witnesses after both sides complete their presentations.

Republicans are so unwilling to argue against witnesses, they can only support delaying the decision, like a broken Magic 8 Ball that keeps saying "Ask again later." Leader MCCONNELL has represented his position as being fair and open-minded. He has said he is not foreclosing the possibility of wit-

nesses—the Senate should just discuss them later. As I have made clear, this makes no sense from a trial perspective. Why should both sides make their entire presentations before even considering requesting evidence? Leader MCCONNELL's proposal is completely backward and through the looking glass.

Let's consider what, practically speaking, Leader MCCONNELL is suggesting when he claims to be open to witnesses at a later date. What does he really mean when he says that?

In the 1999 Clinton trial, the Senate waited 3 weeks into the trial to confront the issue of witnesses. Once they decided on three witnesses, with the support of several Senate Republicans here today, including Leader MCCONNELL, it took time for the witnesses to be deposed and for the Senate to consider what they had submitted. Ultimately, the Clinton trial ran for 2 more weeks.

I want my fellow Republican Senators to ask themselves: After the Senate concludes the part of the trial that Leader MCCONNELL wants to get through, do you think he really wants to extend the trial by several weeks? Leader MCCONNELL has gone on record and said that he wants the trial to span 2 weeks total. Leader MCCONNELL has gone on record and said: "After we've heard the arguments, we ought to vote and move on."

Are we to believe that Leader MCCONNELL, after 2 weeks is up, will really have an open mind about extending the trial several more weeks, or does he want to delay the question of witnesses and documents until later and then, when the time comes, exert enormous pressure on Republicans to reject them to avoid prolonging the trial? He will say: We can't go on any further; let's just end it. Every Republican—every Republican—should ask themselves that question.

Democrats are not advocating a lengthy and drawn-out trial. That is why we proposed handling this issue up front, so evidence can be part of the presentations and so we don't have to extend the trial unnecessarily. We have proposed a schedule that would save the Senate a whole lot of time.

Before voting on a resolution that would punt the question of witnesses until after all the presentations are complete, Senate Republicans must ask themselves: What are Leader MCCONNELL's true intentions?

IRAN

Over the past 3 years, the President's impulsive and erratic approach to foreign policy has made America less safe and less respected. Whether it is Syria or North Korea or Russia, the President's actions have failed to advance our national security—in some cases, failed miserably.

Now, after the aftermath of the U.S. strike on General Soleimani, the President and his foreign policy team have insisted that "the world is a much safer place today." That is what Secretary Pompeo said. In recent weeks,

however, the President's actions have increased the risk of Iran rushing to develop a nuclear weapon, weakened our ability to fight ISIS, and strengthened the hands of Russia and China in the Middle East, at America's expense. How in the world is the world "a much safer place today" than when President Trump took office? It is not.

Every American should ask themselves this question: Are we safer today after these actions, with Russia and China on the ascent, with our ability to fight ISIS weakened, and with Iran rushing to make a nuclear weapon? Every American should ask this question.

As we continue to grapple with the fallout from the President's actions, there are several points for my colleagues to consider. The Trump administration has not been transparent with Congress or the American people. The Trump administration did not consult with Congress prior to the strike on Soleimani and had classified the War Powers Act notification sent to Congress without any justification. There is no reason much of it should be classified.

It took over a week for the administration to conduct a briefing for the Senate about the strike and then the briefers, top members of the administration, practically ran out of the room after only a few questions, putting the "brief" in briefing.

Today Secretary Pompeo refused to testify in the House about the administration's decisions. On something as serious as the current situation in Iran, the administration's lack of transparency has been completely unacceptable. While the President has promised to keep us out of endless wars in the Middle East, his actions have moved us closer to exactly such a war, making the American people and American forces less safe.

While I am thankful that nobody was hurt by Iran's retaliatory missile strikes last week, there are several reasons to be concerned. Iran can strike us in other ways in the months ahead with cyber warfare, proxies, or established terror networks that have destabilized the Middle East for decades. The Supreme Leader himself has said the recent strikes on U.S. installations in Iraq were just "one slap" and "not enough." Iran has also announced it will no longer abide by any restraints on its nuclear program.

The President has tweeted "all is well" with Iran now. You would have to be delusional to believe that. It is sort of like saying North Korea is no longer a nuclear threat.

In many ways, the President has made Americans less safe. Unfortunately, what is happening with Iran is typical of how the President has conducted foreign policy over the last 3 years—erratic, impulsive, and without regard for long-term consequences. As a result, the President's foreign policy is dangerously incompetent.

We cannot say that any major problem area around the globe was better

off than it was 3 years ago. Because of all this—because of this erratic, impulsive foreign policy—the Senate must not allow the President to proceed unchecked. Senator Kaine's War Powers Resolution is needed now more than ever, and I am glad the Senate will consider the resolution this week.

Senator Sanders also has a bill that would deny funding for a war with Iran. We should consider that legislation, which I cosponsored as well. As the situation with Iran continues to evolve, the administration must come back and finish what they barely started last week, keeping Congress briefed and up to speed with all major developments, troop deployments, and strategy.

On matters of war and peace, for the safety of our troops, the security of our Nation is at stake. Congressional oversight and congressional prerogatives are not optional; they are mandatory.

#### CHINA TRADE AGREEMENT

Madam President, finally, on China.

Later this week, China and the United States will participate in a signing ceremony for a so-called phase one of the trade agreement, in which President Trump has agreed to cut some tariffs on Chinese goods in return for temporary assurances with China to buy more agricultural products from the United States.

After 18 months, the President's phase one deal with China is stunning in how little substance it achieves at such a high cost. It fails to address deep structural disparities in our trade relationship with China—disparities that will harm American workers and businesses for years. It also seems like this deal could send a signal to Chinese negotiators that the United States can be steamrolled and that President Trump can be played every time.

Now, I have publicly praised President Trump when he has taken a tough stance with trade negotiations with China at some political risk. I have said his instincts on China were even better than President Bush's and Obama's. So I come to this as someone who is truly rooting for the President to succeed. For these reasons, I am even more disappointed in what President Trump has managed to achieve—or, rather, failed to achieve.

According to public reports and by the administration's own admission, this deal does little to end China's greatest trade abuses. It does not secure commitments on state-sponsored cyber theft, China's massive subsidies to domestic industries, preferential treatment to state-owned enterprises or dumping Chinese goods into the U.S. market.

In signing this agreement, President Trump removes our most effective source of leverage in exchange for mediocre, temporary agriculture concessions, which may not even come to pass, given China's past history. Essentially, President Trump is selling China the farm in exchange for a few magic beans—in this case, soybeans.

The American people need to understand exactly what is in this phase one deal before the United States agrees to continue negotiations with China. So today I am sending the President a letter with a series of crucial questions: What commitments, if any, has China made with regard to its harmful government subsidy programs? What commitments, if any, has China made concerning their state-owned enterprises? What about its practice of dumping products into our markets or their state-sanctioned cyber theft? What help will be afforded to our farmers who have lost billions in the last 2 years, when China has already signed many long-term contracts with other soybean producers in places like Argentina and Brazil?

These issues must be resolved before we move forward, but I fear that after months of costly negotiations, President Trump—facing the election—has sold out American farmers, businesses, and workers in exchange for a photo op.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

#### IMPEACHMENT

Ms. HARRIS. Madam President, just across the street from where I stand today is the U.S. Supreme Court. That building has four words etched in marble above its entrance: "Equal Justice Under Law."

The promise of those four words is that in our country, our system of justice must treat everyone equally regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status, but too many people in our country grow up knowing and experiencing that in America we have two systems of justice—one in which certain people are held accountable and another in which powerful people like Donald Trump escape accountability altogether.

This has been true from the first days of our Nation's history, when a group of men gathered in Philadelphia to debate lofty notions of justice and equality, yet produced a document that literally counted Black Americans as fractions of a person.

In the Declaration of Independence, we were told that "all men are created equal," but we know that in our Nation's founding at that time, the policy of our Nation was to rob indigenous people of their land and their livelihood and to exclude women from the right to vote.

So to make true the promise of America and move us toward a more perfect Union, people have organized and fought and marched for justice. From the suffragettes to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., those fights have won us progress toward a more just and inclusive nation, but, clearly, there is still more work to be done to achieve equal justice under law.

When the determination of whether you sit in jail before trial is too often based on the size of your bank account



rather than the size of your crime, we have not yet achieved equal justice under law. There is more work to be done when young people selling drugs on the corner too often become felons for life, while white-collar criminals face no accountability.

There is more work to be done when regarding the sexual assault of women, the current President has said:

When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything.

There is work to be done when the American people know that the rules aren't equally enforced against powerful people. Unless we acknowledge these truths, too many Americans will remain distrustful of our institutions and cynical about our government and our leaders.

This is the point, my colleagues: We now face a choice. Will we insist that we have one system of justice that applies equally to all or will we continue to have two systems of justice in which some are above the law?

Later this week, the Senate will likely begin the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump. This moment in our history will have consequences. The Senate is charged with deciding whether the President of the United States, with all his power and supposed wealth, will be held accountable for his actions and whether we will finally live up to the principle of "Equal Justice Under Law."

This is why I speak to you today, fully aware that I stand on the shoulders of those who come before me in our Nation's ongoing fight for equality. I speak because I was raised by people who spent most of their lives demanding justice in the face of racism, misogyny, bigotry, and inequality. I speak because I have dedicated my entire career to upholding the rule of law and bringing integrity to our system of justice. I speak to ensure that everyone in California and throughout our country can enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed to them by the U.S. Constitution.

As a U.S. Senator, I speak fully prepared to uphold my solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and to do impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws, and to affirm that my first obligation is to serve the people of the United States—all the people.

I hope my colleagues can agree that our Nation's Founders had the foresight to create a system of checks and balances and anticipate the need to remove a President who might yield to foreign influence or use the Presidency for personal power and benefit.

Our Founders feared that a day like this might come, and so they empowered the U.S. Congress with the tool of impeachment to hold a lawless President accountable.

This week, after months of investigation, sworn testimony, public hearings and debate, the House of Representatives will likely send to the U.S. Senate two Articles of Impeachment.

These articles charge President Trump with abusing his power for his personal and political gain and with obstructing Congress's effort to investigate his misconduct.

In this trial, the U.S. Senate must not only consider the charges against the President but also conduct itself in a way that demonstrates to the American people that in our system of justice no one is above the law. Each Senator here must exhibit the kind of moral and ethical leadership that this President abandoned when he pressured a foreign nation to interfere in our elections.

There is no question that President Trump's misconduct has left a vacuum of leadership in our country, and the American people are therefore rightly looking to the U.S. Senate to demonstrate that their leaders are worthy of the public's trust.

The American people should expect their Senators to seek the truth, not cover up the facts. So let's honor our oath to defend the Constitution by doing the job the American people have entrusted to us.

Let us ensure that this trial is a search for truth and that we follow the facts where they lead and come to a verdict based on all of the available evidence.

Let us do our jobs and insist that we hear from Mick Mulvaney, John Bolton, and anyone with a firsthand knowledge of the President's misconduct. Let us demand that the White House turn over additional emails and documents that shed light on the President's motives for withholding military aid from Ukraine. And let us be clear that an order from this President to block evidence or witness testimony will itself be further evidence of his efforts to obstruct the U.S. Congress.

The importance of this moment in our history cannot be overstated. What we do in this trial will show the world who we are as a country. Our actions will also send a message to further Presidents and future Presidents of the United States about the kind of conduct that is acceptable from the leader of our Nation.

As the U.S. Senate, we must say that it is unacceptable for a President to shake down a vulnerable foreign nation for personal or political benefit. We must say with one voice that no President can disregard the legitimate oversight authority of the U.S. Congress, and we must say, as leaders of the United States of America, that in our system of justice, everyone—everyone—will be held accountable for their actions, including the President of the United States.

My final point is that, years from now, people are going to judge. They are going to judge whether we rose to the solemn occasion that is the impeachment trial of the President of the United States, and we cannot be passive in this moment. I am mindful of Coretta Scott King's words:

Freedom is never really won. You earn it and win it with each generation.

It is incumbent on this generation to fight for a system of justice in which all are treated equally.

In that ongoing fight, we, as the U.S. Senate, must agree that we cannot speak about the ideals of equality and justice and then act in ways that violate those very principles. It is our duty, both as Senators and as proud Americans, to protect the Constitution, to earn the people's trust, and to prove to the American people that it is still within the power of the U.S. Congress to hold the President accountable. History is watching. Our actions here will shape this body's legacy.

I urge my colleagues to have the courage, the foresight, and the patriotism to act in the interest of our Nation and its people. I urge my colleagues to fight for one system of justice in the United States of America and to ensure that no one is above the law. I urge my colleagues to reaffirm the most basic of American principles—that ours is not the government of one man but a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF PETER GAYNOR

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today asking the Senate to confirm the nomination of Mr. Peter Gaynor to be the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The FEMA Administrator serves as the principal adviser to the President, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Homeland Security for all matters related to emergency management.

The Administrator's principal duties include the operation of the National Response Coordination Center and the effective support of all emergency support functions. More broadly, the Administrator coordinates the implementation of a risk-based, all-hazards strategy to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other manmade disasters.

The Agency has over 20,000 employees and a surge capacity force of over 9,000 volunteers to respond during local and national emergencies, working around the clock when necessary.

The President's nominee to head FEMA, Mr. Peter Gaynor, has extensive experience at the local, State, and Federal emergency management levels. In 2018, the Senate confirmed Mr. Gaynor as the Deputy Administrator of FEMA, and for most of last year he served as the Acting Administrator.

Prior to Federal service, he was the director of Rhode Island's Emergency Management Agency. For 26 years prior to his service in emergency management positions, Mr. Gaynor served as an enlisted marine and infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Mr. Gaynor's experience will be valuable as FEMA works to implement the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. A primary goal of that legislation is to help ensure that the model for response to and recovery from natural and man-made disasters is one that is locally executed, State managed, and federally supported.

I am pleased to say that Mr. Gaynor's nomination has broad bipartisan support. Our committee approved his nomination by voice vote in November. Among others, he has received endorsements from Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, Senator JACK REED, Big City Emergency Managers, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

I am grateful to Mr. Gaynor for his willingness to continue serving his country in this role and to his family for their continued sacrifice. I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote yes on his nomination.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Ron Johnson, Mike Rounds, Richard Burr, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the

Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 8, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 11 Ex.]

#### YEAS—76

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Baldwin	Gardner	Peters
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Hawley	Roberts
Blunt	Heinrich	Romney
Boozman	Hirono	Rosen
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson	Sasse
Capito	Jones	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Lankford	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Sinema
Coons	Lee	Smith
Cornyn	Loeffler	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	McConnell	Thune
Crapo	McSally	Tillis
Cruz	Merkley	Whitehouse
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Duckworth	Murkowski	Wyden
Enzi	Murphy	Young
Ernst	Murray	
Feinstein	Paul	

#### NAYS—8

Brown	Menendez	Udall
Gillibrand	Schumer	Van Hollen
Harris	Stabenow	

#### NOT VOTING—16

Bennet	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Booker	Kennedy	Toomey
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Warner
Cramer	Markey	Warren
Durbin	Risch	
Graham	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 8.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my colleagues from Rhode Island and New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SAVE OUR SEAS 2.0

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am sure all of my colleagues are going to want to listen to this speech. I am on the floor with my colleagues Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator MENENDEZ to talk about some very important legislation for our country, legislation that passed the Senate last week. It is the Save Our Seas 2.0 legislation.

I begin by thanking Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator MENENDEZ for their leadership on this bill.

We are going to talk a little bit about the importance of it, why it matters to Alaska, to New Jersey, to

Rhode Island, and to the whole country. This is a significant piece of legislation. It is, really, the most comprehensive piece of legislation to pass the Congress—to pass the Senate—that has dealt with ocean debris and ocean pollution—ever. That sounds like a pretty hyperbolic phrase, but it is true. We checked with the CRS. There has been nothing more comprehensive than this piece of legislation that tackles an issue we all care about—clean oceans.

As a matter of fact, on Thursday night, 100 Senators passed this after there having been a lot of work on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, on the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and on the Committee on Foreign Relations. After about a year of work on this, we finally got it passed. A number of Senators—Democrats and Republicans—were cosponsors. I really want to thank the two Senators who are on the floor right now. In particular, Senator WHITEHOUSE has been a real leader on these issues that deal with oceans. This is an environmental issue that we can solve. Republicans and Democrats in the Congress, the Trump administration in the White House, and environmental and industry groups are all pulling on the same oar, and we had a good start last Thursday on what this does.

I want to turn it over to my colleague from Rhode Island because, in many ways, he has been the real leader, the driver, and is the founder of the Oceans Caucus. Bit by bit, legislation by legislation, he and I cosponsored the first Save Our Seas Act in the last Congress. To much fanfare in the Oval Office, the President signed it, and now you are starting to see people work on this. There is a whole section in the USMCA on cleaning up our oceans. We have gone from Save Our Seas 1.0, which has already passed into law, to Save Our Seas 2.0. I think it is exciting, and I think the American people don't always hear about the bipartisan work that is actually getting done on big issues that matter to our Nation. There is a lot.

Cleaning up our oceans is one that matters to everybody and, certainly, to my State, with its having more coastline than the rest of the lower 48 combined. You don't even have to live in a coastal State to care about this issue. Some of our cosponsors on this bill—on both sides of the aisle—are from States that don't even have any coastline. That is how important it is.

I want to turn it over to Senator WHITEHOUSE. I thank him for his and Senator MENENDEZ' leadership. We will talk a little bit about what is in it and what we are going to do next. This is a good day for the environment in America. It is a good day for the oceans not just in our country, not just in Alaska, not just in Rhode Island but in the world. As a nation, if we are leading on this, which this legislation does, then we are going to be able to help clean up our oceans all over the world. We had a

good start here on Thursday night in the U.S. Senate when we passed this bill legislatively unanimously.

Again, to my colleague from Rhode Island, the floor is his.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor with a bunch of thank-yous after Thursday evening's happy news that Save Our Seas 2.0 passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent.

I thank all of the Senate Members of our bipartisan Oceans Caucus. The Oceans Caucus has been a really good forum for getting these bills moving to a point at which they can pass by unanimous consent. I and Senator MURKOWSKI, who is Senator SULLIVAN's colleague from Alaska, set it up years ago. It now has over 40 Members. It is very bipartisan, and it has had a really important role in moving bipartisan oceans legislation.

So, Oceans Caucus, thank you.

This bill, Save Our Seas 2.0, had to go through three committees. It had to go through Commerce, Foreign Relations, and Environment and Public Works. Let me start in reverse order because Senator BARRASSO, the chairman of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, is here on the Senate floor. I express my appreciation to him and my appreciation to our ranking member, Senator CARPER, for having shepherded this through the committee with unanimous committee support, and that gave it a lot of momentum to go on to Foreign Relations and to Commerce.

So, my friend Senator BARRASSO, thank you, sir. I do appreciate it very much. I think this is a score, a good win. A good deed was done here.

Foreign Relations was also very important, and Senator MENENDEZ, our ranking member, is about to speak, so I will not steal his thunder. He has been an incredibly valuable part of this triumvirate, and I am extremely grateful to Senator MENENDEZ.

Also, on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Senators WICKER and CANTWELL were very helpful about making sure this got through Commerce and were helpful once it was on the floor.

Most of all, though, my thanks go to Senator SULLIVAN, of Alaska. We started down this road quite some time ago. We tentatively got into the space of ocean plastic waste with a simple hearing in the Committee on Environment and Public Works. He had an essential role in making that happen because there was a turf conflict between our subcommittee and the EPW and the Subcommittee on Science, Oceans, Fisheries, and Weather within the Commerce Committee.

Now, if you are not from the Senate, you think that this is all crazy talk, but if you are in the Senate, it is a really serious problem to have to resolve. We had the very good fortune of having the chairman of the Fisheries Subcommittee of the Commerce Com-

mittee and the chairman of our subcommittee of the Environment and Public Works Committee being the same individual, none other than Senator DAN SULLIVAN. So he went out and had a nice debate with himself and was able to negotiate a happy resolution of that turf dispute, and the hearing went forward. Without that, it never would have happened. So that was the opening bid.

Then we got to 1.0, which, admittedly, was not a very big bill, but it was going to test the proposition: Was the Senate willing to legislate on marine plastic waste? Yes. We got a big, booming, 100-vote support for that in the Senate. Senator SULLIVAN was so happy with that outcome that we immediately went to work on crafting 2.0, which, as Senator SULLIVAN has pointed out, is not just a beachhead but is significant marine plastic waste legislation. It will push the administration to do a lot more, for more than half of the waste in the oceans comes from 5 Asian countries, and more than 80 percent of the waste in the oceans comes from 10 rivers in Asia and Africa. This is a solvable problem if we direct attention and resources and solutions to that problem, and I am really looking forward to following up on that.

I am really looking forward to getting right to work on Save Our Seas 3.0 because we are not done here. There is a lot of plastic mess out there to clean up, and there is a lot of energy around getting even more done.

So, Senator SULLIVAN, you have my great appreciation.

I will close, if I may, with one unlikely thank-you. As Senator SULLIVAN mentioned, this reminded me that there are Senators who supported this who don't even have coasts. They are from those square end States in the middle of the country that don't have coasts. One of them who has been very important to this has been Senator INHOFE, of Oklahoma.

Now, on climate change, Senator INHOFE and I are at each other's throats pretty much all of the time. We are always having fights about climate change. I call him a climate denier, and he calls me a climate alarmist. We go back and forth, fighting about climate change. Yet, on this, he has been an essential ally, and having his support has sent, I think, a terrific signal to the Senate that, hey, if Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator INHOFE can agree on this, there is room for me in there somewhere.

And so a final thank you to Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma, but the biggest thank you, of course, is to Senator SULLIVAN, who really made this happen.

With that, I yield to my colleague and friend Senator MENENDEZ, who has been so important to this, so he can add his thoughts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to join Senators WHITE-

HOUSE and SULLIVAN on the floor today to thank our colleagues for passing the legislation that we have all coauthored to combat the environmental crisis of plastic waste in our oceans.

Our partnership represents both the geographic and political urgency behind this growing crisis. Save Our Seas 2.0 is a multifaceted effort that will help the United States to better prevent plastic pollution, respond to marine debris emergencies, and leverage U.S. foreign policy and international engagement to prevent and clean up foreign sources of plastic pollution.

We have a responsibility to protect the health of the world's oceans, which regulate our climate, produce half of the Earth's oxygen supply, and provide food to 2.6 billion people worldwide.

The environmental health of our world depends on healthy oceans, and plastic pollution and marine debris are like cholesterol clogging global ecosystems in countless ways. The reality is that plastic waste in our ocean knows no borders. What may be a plastic wrapper floating down a river in China today could be microplastic in your tuna salad tomorrow.

Let me thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, who has been so much engaged in our oceans since his coming to the Senate—well, even before that, but, certainly, as a leader in the Senate—and Senator SULLIVAN for their longstanding bipartisan leadership on this issue and cooperation on the bill.

I was happy to have supported the original Save Our Seas Act in the 115th Congress. Last year, when several international news stories exposed the tragic environmental impact of plastic on our marine environment, I began working on legislation to enhance U.S. international engagement on this truly global crisis, which served as the basis for title II of our bill. At the time, I was not immediately aware that Senators SULLIVAN and WHITEHOUSE were planning a second act, so to speak, and I dearly appreciate being a part of the Save Our Seas team.

I also want to thank Chairman RISCH for supporting and advancing the international components of this bill through the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as all of the chairs and rankings who have already been mentioned.

I think that advancing three component parts of the bill through all of these respective committees, which is no small feat, and the 20 bipartisan cosponsors shows the Senate's broad support for action on plastic waste.

New Jerseyans know all too well the threat of plastic pollution. Our pristine beaches attract millions of people to the Jersey Shore each year, and our coastal waters support everything from fishing and recreation to the flow of trade, to our ports and harbors. No one wants to swim in plastic or eat fish that fed on microplastic. That is why 25 New Jersey townships have passed local ordinances banning or phasing down disposable plastic products, and



another 26 may soon join them. There is also legislation pending in the New Jersey State Legislature to limit the proliferation of disposal plastics in New Jersey's economy.

With 40 percent of Americans living in coastal communities, my constituents back home are far from the only ones grappling with the hazards of plastic pollution in our oceans.

There is no question we still have work to do. As our bill heads to the House, I look forward to continuing these efforts with Senators WHITEHOUSE and SULLIVAN and our cosponsors as we engage House leaders to act on the bill this year.

Again, thank you to my colleagues. It is good. I know it doesn't always get the headlines. The essence of a good story seems to be conflict not cooperation, but I am thrilled to be a part of cooperation that could make a difference in the lives not just of our oceans but of our families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator MENENDEZ and Senator WHITEHOUSE again for their leadership on this.

We have all seen the pictures and the news stories. The issue, though, is a severe one. The World Economic Forum has estimated that if we don't do anything about this big crisis of ocean debris, but particularly the issue of plastics in the ocean, there are estimates that by 2050 there will be more plastics by weight in the world's ocean than there are fish. We can't let that happen.

So what we have done is we have put together this bill. As already mentioned, there were three different committees. There is an element on the domestic innovation side that creates a Marine Debris Foundation. That is a congressionally chartered private organization.

Think of groups that matter to Americans. There are dozens of these kinds of foundations, but they are important. They send a signal that the Congress of the United States cares about these things. Think about the Red Cross, the American Legion, and the National Parks Foundation. These are all congressionally chartered organizations. The new Marine Debris Foundation will be one of them.

The American Government is focused on this. It is an opportunity for the private sector, and we have seen some industries step up. There is a group called the Alliance to End Plastic Waste that has pledged \$1.5 billion to start addressing this problem. That is not small change. It is going to need that kind of money. Perhaps some of that can go into this foundation.

There is an innovation prize. A lot of focus in our bill is on innovation so that we can solve some of the big challenges in chemistry—a plastic bottle that could fully biodegrade. We don't have that yet, but these are some of the things that the bill looks at doing.

Of course, Senator MENENDEZ talked about the very substantial foreign rela-

tions component because so much of the plastic waste in the oceans comes from countries in Asia and Africa and 10 rivers, estimating almost 80 to 90 percent of all of the plastic waste in all of the oceans. So, again, it is solvable because it is definable.

Then, the third component is improving domestic infrastructure to prevent marine debris through new grants and foreign studies for waste management mitigation. So this covers a lot of different areas—innovation, our domestic side, the international side.

We have momentum. We had a great group of bipartisan Senators—Democrats and Republicans from all over the country and from all political persuasions—showing that momentum. We have the Trump administration fully behind this. In many ways, some of their Federal agencies weighed in significantly to help us design this legislation, and now we need to get it over to the House and move it in the House soon and get it to the President's desk.

So this is a good day for the oceans and a good day for bipartisan success in the U.S. Senate on an issue that people care about. People really care about making sure that we have clean oceans and we are making progress.

So I just want to leave it at that, and I will ask my colleague from Rhode Island, who has been the real leader on this issue, to wrap it up.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am delighted to close this out. Again, I thank Senator SULLIVAN. I think there is reason to hope for a really good appropriations subcommittee hearing on this subject in the coming year. I think there is reason to hope for another Environmental and Public Works Committee full committee hearing on marine plastics. I expect those things will happen, and that will help us with our progress.

One of the things I have come to admire about Senator SULLIVAN is that, as a colonel in the U.S. Marines, he sets himself a mission and then he goes about it with real vigor. One of the missions that he set himself was to make sure that the Trump administration followed up on what Save Our Seas 1.0 did.

There were a lot of doors that were knocked on that had their hinges rattled by Senator SULLIVAN. There are a lot of administration officials who probably had to hold the phone an inch or so away from their ears because Senator SULLIVAN was trying to get their attention on this subject.

Having seen him in action on Save Our Seas 1.0, I very much look forward to watching him in action on Save Our Seas 2.0 and to make sure that its legislative promise is fully realized in executive implementation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I look forward to another White House signing of this with all of our colleagues. I am sure that the administration is interested in it. You and I had a very eventful one over at the White House a couple years ago.

So, again, the momentum is there. We are just going to keep building on it.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, on to Save Our Seas 3.0.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 11, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Peter Gaynor to be Administrator of the Federal Management Agency. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted yea.●

### TRIBUTE TO CONRAD JEFFRIES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I honor Idaho veteran Conrad Jeffries for his service to our nation and for his efforts to address alarmingly high suicide rates in our country, especially among our Nation's veterans and servicemembers.

Conrad knows firsthand the personal costs of military service and the challenges servicemembers face returning to civilian life, and he has dedicated considerably of his time, talents, and resources to serving our country and helping his fellow veterans and military families. On January 12, Conrad Jeffries embarked on a more-than 200 mile run from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to raise awareness about rising suicide rates among veterans, Active-Duty servicemembers, and first responders. I understand his running route is intended to honor three sailors who committed suicide aboard the U.S.S. *George H.W. Bush* in September and promote the use of suicide screening forms to identify the root causes of and prevent veteran suicides. Conrad has said, "Veteran suicide is not the problem. Veteran suicide is the outcome." Conrad has admittedly faced his own personal struggles and has since dedicated his life to solving veteran suicide. This includes working to help others who struggle with mental health and substance abuse.

Conrad, who was raised in American Falls and lives in Boise, ID, served our Nation for 13 years in the Idaho Army National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard.